



# Emergency Management **UPDATE**

November 2000

## "SALTT Talks" speed local relief efforts

By Bob Lambert, VDEM Reservist

**W**hen disaster strikes your community, you need all the assistance you can get — and fast.

Virginia's Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) can coordinate getting many kinds of assistance to support local emergency response and recovery operations — with a little help from you.

The more detailed information you provide, the more quickly assistance can be on its way. However, phoning the VEOC with a request to "Send the National Guard" won't do. It will actually result in loss of precious time.

Before you grab the phone, "SALTT" your request — know the *size, amount, location, type of assistance* and *time frame* in which it is needed.

"If you need emergency generators, for example, we need to know the load, voltage, phasing and amperage, the type of



***SALTT, there is no substitute.** VEOC Communications Technician Barry Gauld fields a request for assistance (Photo illustration).*

equipment and the connection point," says Anthony McLean, operations supervisor.

Effective response depends heavily on the local, state and federal partnership to get necessary resources to those in need.

"That's based on clear communication," McLean says. "To get the job done properly, it is essential to communicate effectively and efficiently the specific information about the request."

As local emergency managers are more likely to know what's available in and near their jurisdiction, the VEOC does not maintain extensive resource lists.

However, the VEOC does have contacts such as commercial suppliers for generators, bottled and bulk water, which can be supplied upon request. In an emergency or disaster, the Virginia Department of General Services can assist in state procurement efforts.

The VEOC is trained to walk callers through the details of assistance requests. "They're tuned in to the kinds of information they need to get help on its way as soon as possible," McLean says.

"SALTT means you can speed up the request process by providing specific information during that first call."

Requests for state assistance can be made by telephone to the VEOC at (804) 674-2400 or toll free at (800) 468-8892.

## Lane reversal concept for hurricane evacuation approved

**V**irginia's coastal communities are now teaming up with state government to augment hurricane evacuation strategies and add another option to the Commonwealth's hurricane response plan.

Governor Jim Gilmore has now approved a concept for reversing westbound lanes of Interstate 64 during extreme hurricane threats.

The proposal promises to open another escape route for residents and tourists. It is the result of a study Gilmore commissioned not long after thousands of motorists were stranded on a South Carolina interstate last year attempting to flee the onset of Hurricane Floyd.

VDEM, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia

State Police worked with affected localities to put together the concept, unveiled July 31 at a local officials meeting. These players will now continue working to develop the lane-reversal evacuation plan.

Using this blueprint, evacuation would begin at the south end of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and continue to the I-295 interchange east of Richmond.

All on and off ramps to the normally eastbound lanes would be closed with the exception of Exit 234 (Williamsburg/Route 199) for gas, food, lodging, and medical emergencies. Peninsula motorists would evacuate on the westbound lanes in the "normal" flow while southside motorists would evacuate on the eastbound lanes.



***Crossing the great divide.** A category 4 or 5 hurricane could prompt a major reconfiguration of I-64.*

A number of states are developing or enhancing evacuation plans that include lane reversal operations, but it is definitely a worst-case scenario option. As state and local governments work to fine-tune

*(continued on page 4)*

# Shenandoah sets standard for mitigation

By Bob Lambert, VDEM Reservist

No stranger to flooding for some two centuries, the communities of the Central Shenandoah Planning District have banded together to do something about what nature has meted out and received national recognition in the process.

Ongoing efforts to reduce the damaging effects of future floods have earned the district a place as Virginia's newest Project Impact community.

"FEMA invited the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission to participate as a Project Impact community because of its long-standing commitment to emergency preparedness, and the economic and environmental well-being of the communities it serves," says Rita A. Calvan, director of FEMA Region III.

An area larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined, the Shenandoah district includes

the cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton and Waynesboro as well as the counties of Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge and Rockingham, and 11 towns within the counties.

Straddling the James and Potomac river basins, the area is laced by numerous flood-prone interior streams. The narrow, deep valleys in this mountainous district can accelerate even a modest rain-fall into a raging torrent.

Mitigation efforts are already well underway. In Glasgow, a community of only 900 in Rockbridge County, more than 50 houses are being elevated, relocated or acquired through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation program.

Buena Vista has elevated homes along interior streams. Lexington created a park where two floodplain houses were bought out. Waynesboro, Rockingham County and other localities also have taken steps



**Still waters run deep.** A nearby stream running under this roadway makes these houses in Buena Vista prime candidates for elevation or buyouts to minimize the effects of repetitive flooding (Courtesy Photo).

to reduce the disastrous effects of flooding.

The planning district's buy-out policies have served as a model for areas such as Southampton County, which was heavily flooded during Hurricane Floyd. Under Project Impact, the district will look at new ways to actively involve the region's population.

"This program will build on already existing efforts to lessen the devastation and economic loss our region suffers from flooding disasters," says Jerry

Rexrode, chairman of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.

Repetitive flooding causes millions of dollars of damage and threatens the lives and livelihoods of thousands of this region's residents.

One of the first recorded disasters was in 1870. There have been eight 100-year flood events since 1969, including hurricanes Camille (1969), Agnes (1972), Juan (1985) and Fran (1996). Major flooding also occurred in June 1995.

"We know we cannot prevent floods from occurring in our region, but with sound planning and effective outreach we can prevent floods from becoming disasters," says William H. Strider, executive director of the planning commission.

VDEM nominated the district for the Project Impact designation and works closely in partnership with this and previously designated Virginia Project Impact communities (Roanoke Valley and the cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake) on hazard mitigation projects.

For more information about these programs, contact Mary Camp at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6583, or e-mail her at [mcamp@vdem.state.va.us](mailto:mcamp@vdem.state.va.us).

## Promotion brings Camp's career full circle



If Mary Camp's head is spinning these days, maybe it's because her career has recently come full circle.

Her journey began when she managed both VDEM's hurricane preparedness and hazard mitigation programs for four years. With tremendous growth in each area, the programs split in 1994 and she became the hazard mitigation program manager.

Now, as VDEM's new director of preparedness and mitigation, Camp not only has oversight for these two programs but also the local planning assistance, state planning and special programs, and radiological emergency preparedness — a grand total of five.

Since she joined VDEM in 1989, Camp has managed a variety of field activities in 10 declared disasters and has experience in local planning assistance. She has also developed and implemented numerous statewide planning, training and educational programs in emergency medical services and emergency management. Before joining VDEM, she worked for 11 years in the Virginia Department of Health as an emergency medical services systems planner.

A St. Louis, Mo., native, Camp earned a bachelor of arts degree in American studies at Missouri University, Columbia, Mo., and her master of science in public health (community health administration) from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.

The Chesterfield County resident is married with two children and is an avid traveler, logging visits to 46 of the 48 states in the continental United States.



# Card covers the bases for first responders

By Steven M. De Lisi, VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer



**J**ust when you thought the 2000 Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) couldn't get any better, VDEM comes up with a new innovation!

The people who brought you the handy "guide to the guide" tutorial on the unique features of the 2000 edition have created a quick reference card for first responders.

Produced as a self-adhesive label, the card is designed to be positioned on the outside front cover of the book.

These guidelines prompt first responders to consider actions such as "looking for other hazards at the scene" to include downed power lines or unstable vehicles.

Additional reminders include advisories to "protect yourself—do not enter areas of known or suspected contamination" and "decontaminate any patients contaminated by the material(s) before medical treatment and transport." Placing the card on the book itself provides an immediately accessible list of initial actions to take when responding to a hazardous materials incident.

This reference also includes the 24-hour toll-free telephone number for the Virginia Emergency Operations Center, through which local governments can request assistance from a VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer.

If you would like to obtain these cards, contact the VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer from your area. If you are unsure about which HMO is assigned to your locality, contact Greg Britt, Hazardous Materials Field Manager, at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6578, or via e-mail at [gbritt@vdem.state.va.us](mailto:gbritt@vdem.state.va.us).

## Raising the stakes for preparedness



**T**odd Branscome may have gotten into emergency management on a bet, but the citizens of Wythe County have received the big payoff.

Starting in 1991 in a part-time capacity, Branscome built the emergency services coordinator job into a full-time position and has gone on to become a Certified Emergency Manager and Hazmat Specialist.

From blinding snow and ice to a natural gas explosion, the outdoorsman has learned to deal effectively with whatever hand man or Mother Nature happens to deal him.

Read Branscome's profile on our Web site at [www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate/profiles/branscome.htm](http://www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate/profiles/branscome.htm) to learn more about the aces he relies upon to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters in this rural community.

# EM wires schools for weather emergencies

By Bob Lambert, VDEM Reservist

**A**fter last spring's tornado preparedness day program in Greene County, Emergency Services Coordinator Darrell Lang was confident that the area could easily handle a tornado. A short time later, Lang wasn't so sure.

He got a National Oceanographic and Aeronautics Administration (NOAA) alert that a tornado was heading north from Albemarle County toward Greene and began making calls to notify the county's eight schools. As fast as he could dial, it took about 14 minutes to reach them all because of busy signals and call forwarding.

"That was unacceptable," Lang says.

Fortunately, little damage was done due to the violent weather. After that scare, Lang used some E-911 funds to buy eight \$40 portable weather monitors from a local electronics store and had them set up in the principal's office in each school.

Now, when NOAA issues a weather alert, the radios sound the alarm and the schools can take the necessary steps to keep the children out of harm's way. Local daycare centers and two private schools are getting NOAA radios on their own.

To link up quickly with the schools on nonweather emergencies, Lang is recommending the purchase of pagers for each school. The 911 center will be able to contact the eight public schools with coded emergency messages.

"They will be tuned to the same frequency so that we can reach everyone at the same time," Lang says.

The weather radios have given the county's schools an inexpensive way to get a head start when a tornado or other bad weather is headed their way. The pagers provide another level of instant communication for crisis communications in this rural community.

*If you would like to share a similar effective real-world solution to disaster preparedness/education, please contact the editor, Barbara Bowen, at [bbowen@vdem.state.va.us](mailto:bbowen@vdem.state.va.us).*

## L-CAR launch to give EMs new direction

**A**ttention, emergency managers! Have you ever felt as if you didn't know where to begin a hazard analysis? Are you having difficulty determining which project to work on first or what is really a priority program?

Well, your partners at VDEM have the answer. It's a new emergency management tool called Local Capability Assessment for Readiness or L-CAR.

This dynamic assessment tool will be ready for distribution in late spring. Look in our December issue to learn more about it.





### Emergency Management

**Coordinator's Briefing**  
November 8/Williamsburg

**EOC Mgmt. and Operations**  
November 14-16/Roanoke

**Exercise Design**  
January 9-10, 2001/Richmond

**Hazardous Weather and Flooding Preparedness**  
January 23-25/Virginia Beach

### Reservist Training

**Reservist Program Seminar**  
November 16/Richmond

**HF/Operation Secure Procedures**  
November 16-17/Richmond

**Mobile CP Orientation**  
December 14-15/Richmond

**Media Awareness Workshop/  
Asking for Help/  
VEOC Tabletop Exercise**  
January 9, 2001/Richmond

### Search and Rescue

**GSAR Institute (Part II)**  
November 10-12/Marion

**GSAR Institute (Part I)**  
January 26-28, 2001/Blue Ridge

### Technological Hazards

**Advanced Hazmat Control**  
November 13-17/Ashland

**Chemistry of Hazardous Materials**  
December 4-15/Newport News

*Register online at [www.vdem.state.va.us/train/calendar.cfm](http://www.vdem.state.va.us/train/calendar.cfm)!*

Mark your calendar to join us in...

## "Making the Connection"

**When:** March 14-16, 2001

**Where:** Kingsmill Marriott  
Williamsburg, Virginia

**Sponsors:** Virginia Department of Emergency Management  
Virginia Emergency Management Association



Contact Conventions Plus, Inc., at (757) 474-3096 or [mary.powell14@gte.net](mailto:mary.powell14@gte.net) to learn more. Program information and online registration will soon be available on our Web site at [www.vdem.state.va.us](http://www.vdem.state.va.us).

### Hurricane Evacuation (continued from page 1)

Virginia's plan, VDEM State Coordinator Michael Cline says the roles of each participant still need to be refined. Along with requirements to supply wreckers and emergency responders from the local jurisdictions, ramp metering will also be a crucial issue to ensure that too many cars do not enter the road at one time.

"While we do have logistical concerns, almost everyone agrees that lane reversal should be an option," says Cline. "Evacuation is one of our primary methods of dealing with a hurricane and we will bring in state resources — State Police, VDOT, National Guard — to work with our local counterparts and implement it effectively."

For more information about this plan or other hurricane-related issues, contact VDEM Hurricane Planner Stewart Baker at (804) 695-9506 or e-mail at [baker@inna.net](mailto:baker@inna.net).

### This month in Virginia Storm History ...



**O**n November 24-25, 1938, an early heavy snowstorm dumped seven inches in Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia and as much as 2.5 feet of snow in western Maryland and the Virginia mountains. It was the largest snow of record for November.

The heavy snow hit from Virginia to New England. Hundreds of automobiles were snowbound on the highway during the Thanksgiving holiday. Three people died in Virginia in the storm.

Check out VDEM's Winter Preparedness Campaign on our Web site at [www.vdem.state.va.us/00winter](http://www.vdem.state.va.us/00winter) to learn more about Virginia's winters and cold weather safety.



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